



Swiss Chard: 9 Healthy Facts

The history and nutritional benefits of this leafy green -- plus a fabulous recipe for a Swiss chard frittata.

By Chloe Thompson

FROM THE WEBMD ARCHIVES 

The earthy-tasting Swiss chard is a powerhouse of nutrition. And with its rainbow assortment of stem colors, it's as pleasing on the plate as it is to the palate. Want to learn more? Here are nine facts that not everyone knows about Swiss chard, plus a Swiss chard low-fat frittata recipe that takes leafy greens to a whole new dimension.

Origins of Swiss chard:

This leafy green was identified by a Swiss botanist and is a variety of *Beta vulgaris*. Today, Swiss chard is most popular in Mediterranean countries.

Alternative names for Swiss chard:

The plant has numerous monikers, including silverbeet, Roman kale, and strawberry spinach.

The goosefoot family:

The tall leafy vegetable is a part of the goosefoot family -- aptly named because the leaves resemble a goose's foot. Other members are beets and spinach.

Health benefits of Swiss chard:

Swiss chard is a nutritional powerhouse -- an excellent source of vitamins K, A, and C, as well as a good source of magnesium, potassium, iron, and dietary fiber.

Swiss chard rainbow:

The thick stalks are red, white, yellow, or green. All have a mildly bitter taste.

The origins of "chard":

"Chard" comes from the Latin word *cardus*, meaning thistle.

Swiss chard growth:

Swiss chard plants can grow to 28 inches high.

Cooking Swiss chard:

Prepare Swiss chard by rinsing the crisp leaves several times in warm water. Leaves and stalks can be boiled, steamed, or roasted.

Still more health benefits of Swiss chard:

One cup of chopped Swiss chard has just 35 calories and provides more than 300% of the daily value for vitamin K. But skip this veggie if you're prone to kidney stones; it contains oxalates, which decrease the body's absorption of calcium and can lead to kidney stones.

Healthy Recipe

Swiss Chard Potato Frittata

Ingredients

Makes 4 servings

Cooking spray

1 1/2 cups diced potatoes (about 1/2 pound or use frozen hash browns)

1 large onion, chopped

4 cups (about 6 ounces) coarsely chopped Swiss chard (stems and center ribs removed)

4 large eggs

4 large egg whites

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp pepper

1/2 cup shredded low-fat cheese

Directions

1. Heat an 8- to 10-inch ovenproof skillet coated with cooking spray over medium-high heat. Preheat broiler.
2. Sauté onions until browned, about 8 to 10 minutes; set aside. In same skillet, sauté potatoes until golden brown, about 8 to 10 minutes; set aside. Add Swiss chard to skillet over medium heat, and cook about 6 to 8 minutes. Add cooking spray as needed.
3. In a medium bowl whisk eggs, egg whites, salt, and pepper until frothy. Mix in onions, potatoes, and Swiss chard.
4. Heat skillet with cooking spray over medium-high heat and pour egg mixture into pan. Cook covered 3 to 5 minutes or until set.
5. Spread cheese on frittata. Broil 3 to 5 minutes until browned.

Per serving: 218 calories, 17 g protein, 20 g carbohydrate, 9 g fat (4 g saturated fat), 221 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 3 g sugar, 445 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 36%.

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Sources 
SOURCES:

The George Mateljan Foundation for the World's Healthiest Foods: "Swiss Chard."
Foodreference.com: "Swiss Chard."

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